

[No Heroes]

JUL 6 [1939?]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Herman Partnow Saul Levitt

ADDRESS 557 W. 114th St. 557 W. 114th St.

DATE June 14, 1939

SUBJECT Maritime Folklore

1. Date and time of interview June 4, 1939
2. Place of interview West 12th Street
3. Name and address of informant Forty Fathoms
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C

TEXT OF INTERVIEW (UNEDITED)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Herman Partnow Saul Levitt

ADDRESS 557 West 114th Street 557 West 114th Street

DATE June 14th, 1939

SUBJECT Maritime Folklore

AND NO HEROES ABOUT IT

The sea is rough it ain't the sailor's home. The sea has her will since the development of the human race. The sailor's only thinking of the land. Landlubbers like the sea. Four of five days on fast ships, drinkin highballs. Not a seventh month beat - swingin a coal shovel - now it's oil burning and we're movin ahead, but there's plenty of coal shovels - The sailor's thinkin of a chicken farm - until he gets to the first saloon. But it's a chicken farm not the sea he's thinkin about. He'd like to hear the sea's toss and the wind's kick, that Masefield crap - but, Jesus, he must be built of deficient material, he'd like to see them manifest but he can't see them things. There ain't no symphonic orchestras on a freighter to encourage him, just a guitar in the foc'sel. Some sailors get booms dropped on him, some get poisoned and 2 some were dropped over the side and even deliberately shot, until they commenced work on Johnny Q. Shipowner or John Bannanas. They were havin a swell time with our hides until we got set to have a big bonfire on the lawn in

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Washington. We scared them and today we got certificates. Then we had a tussle with Copeland when he tried to put that fink bill across. This bird - he's dead but he's a bird to me - would have bound down the sailor with records: thumbprint in the book, the skipper keeps that book and woe to Johnny Sailor if he opened his trap, this book was handed over to the seamen to bind them under ironclad control. Then we hadda fight Sailor Bill. That's Mr. William Green, he who knows all our problems and he can solve it. If I was Bill Green I'd move into the Chamber of Commerce - that's where he belongs, he's a disgrace as a union man, he's a disgrace as a man himself. It's the Sailor Green-o who's got maggots in his bean-o....It's a case for fight for survival and no heroes about it. A guy gets notorious for wanting better conditions, he pounds the streets in Battery Park and he's blackballed and blacklisted, and disgusted with the kinda life he's got ashore. The sea is the ace in the hole, that's all. War-time we were on the high seas and we got the news the war was over. One of the guys broke down and wept. Boy, did we knock the shingles off his damn roof head. Any guy says he likes the sea that much is a bug, he belongs in a bughouse.